GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:390
ANSWERED ON:09.04.2003
TELEPHONE CONNECTIVITY IN RURAL AREAS
GADDE RAMAMOHAN;M.V.V.S MURTHI

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether a pilot project to bridge the digital divide between rural and urban areas has been launched in remote areas of Andhra Pradesh as reported in the Times of India, dated March 15, 2003;

(b) if so, the facts thereof;

(c) whether the government propose to provide such types of phones and facilities to all the rural areas of the country;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor;

(e) whether the Union Government propose to provide assistance and subsidies to the NGOs working in this field; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND DISINVESTMENT (ARUN SHOURIE)

(a) to (f): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT TO BE LAID ON THE TABLE OF THE LOK SABHA IN RESPECT OF PARTS (a) TO (f) OF LOK SABHA STA QUESTION NO. 390 FOR 9TH APRIL, 2003 REGARDING TELEPHONE CONNECTIVITY IN RURAL AREAS.

(a) & (b): A Non-Governmental Organisation namely the Rural Telecom Foundation(RTF) on its own initiative has launched a pilot project in Kalleda village in Warangal district of Andhra Pradesh on 13.09.2002 on experimental basis. The experiment is known as `Gram-Phone` scheme. It makes use of 65 Direct Exchange Lines(DELs) provided to individual subscribers in normal way from Parvathgiri Exchange. The aim of the pilot project is to cover more village houses by sharing one direct telephone line by another 3 nearby houses in the form of parallel lines. The parallel lines do not have the facility of making outgoing calls and incoming calls cannot be received by some houses directly.

(c) to (f): Results of the experiment will be observed. Telephone connectivity of this type has some of the difficulties normally associated with a number of telephones being in parallel like no secrecy, dependence on the leader for outgoing calls, billing disputes, increase in fault liability, unsatisfactory quality of speech. As such, the telephone service made available under the above project is not in line with the standards followed by BSNL in regard to providing telephone services to its subscribers. However, Government shall review the results of the experiment after six months, and assess whether the experiment is worth replication.